

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2853

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 6137

E.O. 11652 : N/A

TAGS : OREP

SUBJECT : CODEL SOLARZ

SUMMARY: CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ SPENT A VERY ACTIVE EIGHTY HOURS IN BANGLADESH WHICH CONCENTRATED ON EXPOSING HIM TO FIELD ACTIVITIES, BUT WHICH ALSO INCLUDED A USIS LECTURE PRESENTATION AND NUMEROUS CONTACTS WITH BDG AND EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY MEMBERS. THE MAIN EMPHASIS WAS ON ALL TYPES OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO BANGLADESH PARTICULARLY IN THE POPULATION, EDUCATION, AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT FIELDS. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING HIS ARRIVAL AT NOON ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, MR. SOLARZ WAS GIVEN BRIEFINGS BY THE COUNTRY TEAM AND THE USAID STAFF. IN THESE SESSIONS HE WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING A FEEL FOR THE OVERALL CONDITIONS OF THE COUNTRY AND SPECIFICALLY WHAT EFFECT BOTH U.S. AND OTHER DONOR AID PROGRAMS WERE HAVING. THESE BRIEFINGS WERE FOLLOWED BY A FOUR AND ONE HALF HOUR WORKING DINNER SESSION WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF REPRESENTATIVES OF EXPATRIATE, GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE AGENCIES WORKING IN BANGLADESH. THIS SESSION WAS CHARACTERIZED BY INDIVIDUAL CONVERSATIONS FOLLOWED BY GROUP DISCUSSIONS OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS, I.E., POPULATION CONTROL INCLUDING BOTH POLICY ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS; USE OF PVOS AND THEIR COORDINATION WITH DONOR AND BDG AGENCIES; POTENTIAL FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF LONG TERM SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

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2. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, WAS SPENT ON A NINE HOUR FIELD

TRIP TO THE MIRZAPUR AREA IN TONGAIL DISTRICT. MAJOR STOPS INCLUDED MIRPUR CAMP FEEDING CENTER WHICH IS BEING RUN BY THE IRISH PVO, CONCERN. HE SEEMED IMPRESSED WITH THE DEDICATION SHOWN BY THE STAFF AND THE RESULTS OF THEIR EFFORTS IN TERMS OF FEEDING, EDUCATION, VOCATION, SANITATION, AND HOUSING PROBLEMS. WHEN HE LEARNED OF THE PROHIBITION AGAINST U.S. SUPPORT FOR THIRD COUNTRY PVOS HE FELT THIS MIGHT BE AN AREA WHERE LEGISLATIVE CHANGE MIGHT BE WARRANTED. THE MAJORITY OF THE DAY WAS SPENT VISITING THE AID SUPPORTED CARE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT MIRZAPUR. HERE HE WAS SHOWN THE METHODS BY WHICH THE DIVERSIFICATION OF CROPS WAS BEING PURSUED THROUGH LOCAL COOPERATIVES. HE ALSO VISITED A LOCAL SCHOOL WHERE HE EVIDENCED GREAT INTEREST IN THE AMOUNT AND TYPE OF EDUCATION BEING OFFERED. FYI A REQUEST TO SPONSOR A SCHOOL CHILD'S TRIP TO THE U.S. MAY RESULT FROM THIS VISIT. END FYI. THIS WAS A RECURRING INTEREST THROUGHOUT HIS TIME IN BANGLADESH.

RETURNING TO DACCA IN THE EVENING HE GAVE A LECTURE AT THE U. S. BICENTENNIAL HALL ON THE RECENT U. S. ELECTIONS AND THEN ATTENDED A DINNER AND DISCUSSION GROUP WITH LOCAL NEWS MEDIA AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERS.

3. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, WAS SPENT ON A FOURTEEN HOUR FIELD TRIP TO THE INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (IRDP) THANA AT MUKTHGACHA, MYMENSINGH DISTRICT. THIS IS AN IRDP THANA WITH A SPECIAL PROGRAM IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT BEING FUNDED BY THE WORLD BANK. DURING THIS TRIP HE VISITED RURAL VILLAGES AND WAS SHOWN HOW THE INTEGRATED PROGRAMS HAD IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE, PROVIDED EDUCATION FACILITIES, MADE AVAILABLE AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPED LOCAL HANDICRAFT INDUSTRIES FOR CASH INCOME GENERATION. THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, MYMENSINGH, PERSONALLY ESCORTED HIM THROUGH THE THANA. HE WAS ALSO ACCOMPANIED BY SENIOR USAID, IBRD, AND IRDP PERSONNEL FROM DACCA.

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ON THE WAY TO MYMENSINGH HE VISITED THE TONGI RELOCATION CAMP AND DISCUSSED SEVERAL SELF-HELP PROJECTS BEING ASSISTED BY PVOS FOR EMPLOYMENT GENERATION FOR THE CAMP MEMBERS. PERSONS IN THIS CAMP WERE RELOCATED FROM THE DACCA STREETS AFTER THE 1974 FLOODS. HE WAS DISTURBED BY THE STRONG METHODS APPARENTLY USED IN THE RELOCATION. ON THE RETURN FROM MYMENSINGH HE STOPPED AND HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH DR. ZAFRUL-

LAH CHOWDHURY AT SAVAR ON HIS PEOPLE'S HEALTH PROJECT WITH ITS PARAMEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES. MR. SOLARZ WAS VERY INTRIGUED WITH THIS CONCEPT AND WONDERED WHY THE USG WAS NOT SUPPORTING THIS TYPE OF INITIATIVE RATHER THAN THE COMPARATIVELY MORIBUND BDG PROGRAMS. HE WAS ALSO IMPRESSED BY DR. CHOWEDHURY'S ABILITY TO GET HEALTH SERVICES PAID FOR BY PATIENTS AND BY HIS ARGUMENTS AGAINST INCENTIVES.

DURING THE EVENING AT A DINNER BY DCM CHESLAW, HE HELD EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS, AMBASSADOR MASTERS AND THE U.S. COUNTRY TEAM MEMBERS ON THE GENERAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN BANGLADESH.

4. MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ MET WITH IBRD CHIEF OF MISSION, LEONARD WEISS, WHERE THEY DISCUSSED THE BANK'S VIEW THAT U.S. LEGISLATION WAS UNDULY RESTRICTIVE BECAUSE OF THE NARROWNESS OF FIELDS SUPPORTED UNDER THE NEW DIRECTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, MR. WEISS CITED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RAILWAYS TO OVERALL DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH AND POINTED OUT THAT AID LEGISLATION APPEARED TO PROHIBIT SUPPORT IN THIS AREA. THIS MEETING WAS FOLLOWED BY ONE WITH FHAFIUL AZAM, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, PLANNING COMMISSION. THE BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENT PAPER OUTLINING THE GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS BETWEEN NOW AND THE YEAR 2000 WAS REVIEWED BY THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN. CODEL SOLARZ WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE DIFFICULTIES OF MEETING THE POPULATION GOALS CALLING FOR AN AVERAGE 1.5 PERCENT GROWTH RATE LEADING TO A YEAR 2000 POPULATION OF 120 MILLION. TO MR. SOLARZ'S QUESTION AS TO A BDG PREFERENCE FOR BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL AID THE UNCLASSIFIED

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DEPUTY CHAIRMAN STATED BOTH WERE NECESSARY.

MR. SOLARZ THEN VISITED A BUSTEE AREA WHERE HE WAS BRIEFED AND SAW CONCERNED WOMEN FOR FAMILY PLANNING STAFF PERSONS MAKING THEIR VISITS. DURING THIS AND EACH OF HIS VISITS TO FAMILY PLANNING PROJECTS HE WAS KEENLY INTERESTED IN THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE DESIRE FOR LARGE FAMILIES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO ACCEPTORS WHO WISH TO CONTROL THEIR FAMILY SIZE.

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2854

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 DACCA 6137

A PLANNED LUNCHEON BY AMBASSADOR MASTERS AND A VISIT WITH THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE WERE PRE-EMPTED BY A JOINT CALL ON GENERAL ZIA BY AMBASSADOR MASTERS, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS AND CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ. THIS HAS BEEN REPORTED IN SEPTEL. IN THE AFTERNOON CODEL SOLARZ VISITED A BANGLADESH ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTARY STERILIZATION CLINIC AND THEN HAD A DISCUSSION WITH THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DACCA DISTRICT, ON THEIR ZPG PROJECT. HE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN THE DIFFERENT METHODS AND INCENTIVES BEING ATTEMPTED TO GET FULL ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING AT THE TWO CHILD LEVEL IN THE PROJECT AREAS. THE QUESTION OF INCENTIVES AND DISINCENTIVES WAS FREQUENTLY RAISED AND THE CONGRESSMAN IS INTERESTED IN OBTAINING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM STUDIES IN THIS COUNTRY OR OTHER COUNTRIES ON THIS SUBJECT.

5. PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ SUMMED UP HIS VISIT WITH THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS: (A) THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS WERE BETTER THAN HE HAD ANTICIPATED; (B) THE PROBLEMS WERE EXTREMELY COMPLEX AND DEEPROOTED; AND (C) THE CALIBRE OF THE PEOPLE HE MET AND THE EFFORTS THEY WERE MAKING WERE VERY IMPRESSIVE. IN SPITE OF THE ENORMITY OF THE DIFFICULTIES HE SEEMED TO BE BASICALLY HOPEFUL SOLUTIONS COULD BE FOUND AND HE FELT OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE WAS ESSENTIAL TO SUCH SOLUTIONS.

MASTERS

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